

Happer

Review of
Dr. S.W. Williams'
Middle Kingdom

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THE PROF. WILLIAMS' MIDDLE KINGDOM 2
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A REVIEW. DR. S. W. WILLIAMS' MIDDLE KINGDOM, CHAPTER V. POPULATION
AND STATISTICS.

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MOST readers who take up this elegant reissue of a standard work on China will naturally turn to the chapters which discuss the subjects in which they feel a special interest. Many will turn first to the last chapters in the 2nd Vol., which continue the history of the intercourse with Foreign nations till the present time. Some will turn with special interest to the chapters on the nature of the Chinese Language and its Literature, seeing that the learned author is now the Professor of the Chinese Language and Literature in one of the oldest Colleges in the U.S.A. At this particular juncture, when a war with France is much discussed, some readers will turn first to those chapters which give some details of the wars of 1840 and of 1860 in order that they may form some correct opinion in reference to the knowledge which the Chinese have of military science and art. It is only the truth to say that on most things pertaining to China, those who consult this revised edition of a valuable work will find the information they seek.

It is not my purpose to give any general review of the whole range of subjects that are treated of in this cyclopedic work. My purpose is to present to our readers a statement of the results of the latest investigations of the learned Professor on the population of China followed with further discussion of the subject. The author has made fewer changes in this chapter than perhaps in any other of equal interest in the two volumes. These pages are occupied with a detailed presentation of the censuses of the population which have been taken from the ninth century B. C., and in subsequent periods down to 1868, with discussions on various matters connected with them. Those discussions take a wide range presenting reasons for regarding some of the censuses as more reliable than others, stating considerations intended to show that the productions of the country could support such a population as is then stated to exist and comparing the density of the population in China with that in other countries in Europe and Asia. Dr. Williams adheres to the opinion which he expressed in the first edition that the census of 1872 which makes the population at that time to be 362,447,183, is the most reliable census which has been made known to Foreigners. He then gives from *Almanac de Gotha* 1882, as taken from Chinese Customs' Reports the population of each separate province, making the aggregate population of the eighteen provinces in 1881 to be 380,000,000.

Professor Williams expresses his opinion in reference to the population of the Empire and the reliability of the censuses thus, "The subject of the population of China has engaged the attention of the monarchs of the present dynasty, and their censuses have been the best sources of information in making up an intelligent opinion upon the matter. Whatever may be our views of the actual population, it is plain that these censuses, with all their discrepancies and inaccuracies, are the only reliable sources of information. The conflicting opinions and conclusions of foreign writers *neither give any additional weight to them, nor detract from their credibility*. As the question stands at the present, they can be doubted, but they cannot be denied; it is impossible to prove them, while there are many grounds for believing them; The enormous total which they exhibit can be declared to be improbable, but not shown to be impossible." Vol. 1. pp. 258-9. "From 1792 to 1812 the increase of the population [as shown by the censuses of these dates] was 54,126,679 or an annual advance of 2,706,338, not quite one per cent per annum for twenty years. At the same ratio of progress the present population would amount to over 450,000,000; and this might have been the case had not the Tai-ping rebellion reduced the numbers. An enumeration, No. 22 [referring to the number in the list of censuses giving the population as 404,946,514] was published in 1868 by the Russian Professor of Chinese Vassibivitch as a translation from official documents. Foreigners have had greater opportunities for travel through the country between the years 1840-1880 and have ascertained the enormous depopulation in some places caused by wars, short supplies of food in consequence of scarcity of laborers, famines, brigandage, each adding its own power of destruction at different times and places. The conclusion will not completely satisfy any inquirer, but the population of the empire cannot now reasonably be estimated as high as the census of 1812 by at least twenty-five millions. The last in the list of the censuses, No 28, is added as an example of the efforts of intelligent persons residing in China to come to a definite and independent conclusion on this point from such data as they can obtain. The Imperial Customs Service has been able to command the best native assistance in their researches and the table of population given above from the *Gotha Almanac* is the summary of what has been ascertained. The population of extra-provincial China is really unknown at present. Manchuria is put down at twelve millions by one author, and at three or four millions by another, without any official authority for either; and all those vast regions in Ili and Thibet may be easily set down at from twelve to fifteen millions.

To sum up, one must confess that if the Chinese censuses are worth but little, compared with those taken in European states, they are better than the guesses of foreigners who have never been in the country, or who have travelled only partially in it." pp. 270-1.

We think all our readers will agree in the opinion which Dr. Williams has himself expressed viz. "that the conclusion *will not completely satisfy any inquirer*, but the population of the empire cannot now reasonably be estimated as high as the census of 1812 by at least twenty-five millions." And most readers will, I think, agree in the opinion that the chapter on the population of China is the most unsatisfactory one in the whole book. Dr. Williams has indicated very clearly the source whence valuable materials for confirming or disproving the figures as given in the censuses might be obtained, viz, from the observation of foreign travellers. Up to 1848 the exclusion of foreigners was so complete that there was no opportunity of gaining information of the state of the country by such observation. Hence those who investigated such questions as the number of the population, were shut up to the statements of Chinese censuses and native writers, and surmises as to the probable correctness of their statements; and the possibility of the productions of the country being sufficient to support a population so numerous as it was reported to be. The consideration of such probabilities does not satisfy inquirers; and when there is the opportunity of travelling in the country and comparing the appearance of things and the evidences of the populousness of the provinces with that of western countries where the correct number of the population is fully known, we are not restricted to statements given in the censuses, and by native writers. Notwithstanding Professor Williams' declaration that the censuses cannot be disproved most persons will admit that the statements of intelligent travellers do greatly discredit their figures.

But before proceeding to present the observations of travellers in China we must draw attention to a census of the population of China to which Dr. Williams has not referred. This is the census of 1842 as reported by Mr. Sacharoff member of the Imperial Russian Embassy in Peking and translated into English by the Rev. W. Lobscheid and published in Hongkong in 1862. In this census the population is given at 414,686,994. This number was made out, the author says from "the rolls for the years A.D. 1841 and 1842, which were obtained" the writer says "from the Minister of Finance. According to this list the population of China amounted to 178,634,087 families and 418,457,311 individuals for 1841 and 179,554,967 families, and 414,686,994 individuals in 1842."

English Translation p. 49, Mr. Sacharoff says, "We find in the census of twenty six years from A.D. 1757 to 1783, an increase of 98,685,457 individuals, *i.e.* nearly 3,603,287 annually. From A.D. 1782 to 1812, *i.e.* within a period of twenty-nine years, we find an increase of 77,685,394, or at the rate of 2,677,914 individuals annually. From A.D. 1812 to 1842 thirty years elapsed, and the increase of the population within this period, is only 53,993,797 or an average annual increase of 1,799,797 individuals." p. 50. In this census of 1842 the population of Chihli province is stated to be 36,879,838 and that of Chekiang is stated to be 30,437,974; Kiangsu 39,646,924; Nganhwei 36,596,968; Fuhkien 25,799,556; Kansuh 19,512,716. The author after presenting these figures for the census of 1842 says, "In conclusion, and in confirmation of what we have said, we will give a few extracts from native Reports and Reivews, which, during the last century and in different times, have been collated in the work entitled *Chuan-chan Tsin-shi Wan-pan*;—To ascertain the amount of the population is not a very easy task. Eight persons are in general counted to each family. But with this computation we get only an approximative and hypothetical increase of the population. We only know the population has considerably increased; but it is difficult to prove the exact number of its increase. You examine the rolls and suddenly discover fresh abuses. A large number live in villages and distant regions. Were we to command all the inhabitants to appear with their families before the magistrates, that would become intolerable to the people; were we to command the magistrates to proceed in person into the villages and settlements, in order to ascertain the number of inhabitants in every house, that would become too burdensome to the officers. The district magistrates never get through their judicial proceedings and the levying of taxes, and have not a single holiday which they could devote to the revision. The most diligent and most acute is incompetent to verify the census. Hence their inferiors have treated the subject with the utmost indifference, and entirely neglected their duty. The verification of the census for every five years is also no easy task. If we cannot have the verification of former censuses, then it is impossible to ascertain the truth with accuracy; for it is neither easy nor possible to enroll the merchants and the remainder of the fluctuating population, who to-day arrive at a place and quit it to-morrow. Hence the clerks are commissioned with taking the census as formerly and with this the matter drops." p. 52.

The writer at page 50 in referring to the census of 1842, says, "These figures show that the same abuses which characterized the

reign of the Sung prevail also in our days. For the present census gives only two souls to one family. When and under what unhappy circumstances can such a state of things exist? Husband and wife are two persons but where are the children?" And yet in the passage quoted above from Chinese writers it is stated that—"Eight persons are in general counted to each family." These statements bring forward one great cause of the uncertainty of the Chinese censuses, and the reason of the discrepancies that appear in the figures as given by different writers. Dr. Williams says; "In the tables, for example, they employ the phrase *Jin-ting* for a male over 15 years of age as the integer; this has then to be multiplied by some factor of increase to get at the total population; and this figure must be obtained elsewhere. It must not be overlooked that the object in taking a census being to calculate the probable revenue by enumerating the taxable persons, the margin for error and deficiency depends on the peace of the state at the time, and not chiefly on the estimate of *five* or more to a household." Vol. I. p. 268.

We would say the margin for error is very great from better sources. For first, each taxable person that is omitted does not withdraw one from the aggregate number, but the number which is fixed upon for a family, whether that number may be 3 or 5, and, second, when the number of taxable persons is given it makes a very *great difference* in the aggregate of individuals whether that number is multiplied by 3 or 5. And to this day, after some 200 years of discussion, the various writers are not agreed as to which figure should be used. Some multiply the number of taxable persons by 8 and some by 5, and hence the discrepancies in the statement of the aggregates, and yet Mr. Sacharoff says; "that in the census of 1842, the number of individuals is only a few more than double the number given as the integers. And the Chinese author quoted by him says "the number reckoned to a family," is neither 3, nor 5 but 8. This statement throws the aggregates of the individuals as given into great confusion and uncertainty. It would appear most obvious, that in order to have any certainty in the matter we must know what is the purpose for which a given census is taken. If it is to know the taxable inhabitants then it must be settled by some recognized Chinese authorities what proportion of the whole number are taxable, and then multiply the number of taxables by the ratio to get the whole number, and even then it will only be an approximation to the actual number.

Mr. Sacharoff accepts the census of 1812 as reliable and bases his arguments in favor of the correctness of the census of 1842 largely on the fact that the ratio of the increase of population from

1812 to 1842 was nearly the same as that which had occurred from 1782 to 1812 and hence the reasons for accepting the reported figures of the population in 1842 are in the main the same as accepting those of 1812. These give the population in 1842 to be 414,686,994. It appears strange that Dr. Williams should not have alluded at all to this census. To complete the List of censuses he should have given the numbers of the population as published by Mr. Sacharoff. I proceed now to present the observation of travellers in China during these latter years.

No traveller in China has had better opportunities of observation, or has been better qualified to give reliable opinions on the state of the country and its population than Baron Von Richthoven. In his Letter on the Provinces of Chekiang and Nganhwei of 1871 he says: "It is with some hesitation that I undertake to present an attempt at estimating the population of the province of Chekiang. But it is desirable that we should arrive at some correct figures in respect to the statistics of China, and I cordially invite contradiction to statements if it tends to correct them. If the area of Chekiang is computed on the great map of China as published at Wuchang, we arrive at the following detailed figures; total area 35,425 statute miles, or about 36,000 square miles, if the islands are included. [The Baron divides the whole into some 8 sub-areas according to natural divisions as the alluvial plain and the basins of different rivers and the number of square miles in each subdivision]. Those portions of this area comprised under the numbers 1 and 4, and having an aggregate area of 3,750 square miles, are the southern extremity of the plain of the lower Yang-tze, and, like the other parts of it, are densely populated. Although it was undoubtedly more populous in former times, an average of 500 inhabitants to a square mile is probably a very high estimate, if we include in it the country and the *district* cities. I add besides, for the five departmental cities. It results from my preceding description of Chekiang, that the rest of the province is *very hilly*; and although it contains about 2000 square miles of tolerably well populated broad valley land, this is more than counter-balanced by large tracts of country which are nearly uninhabited. I believe I do not underrate the population of this hilly part in putting it down at 100 to the square mile. We have then 3750 square miles with 500 inhabitants to the square mile 1,875,000: 32,250 square miles with 100 inhabitants per square mile 3,225,000: Population of Hangchow, Kiahing, Huchow, Shaohing, and Ningpo, 2,000,000. If we add for the fishing population on the coast and the islands 1,000,000 we have a total of 8,100,000 inhabitants, or 225 to a square mile. "It is my opinion that these figures are too high, and

that an actual census would show no more than five or six millions. To refer to only once instance. The basin of the Fansui river covers about 1200 square miles. At the above rate for the hilly districts of 100 to the square mile, it should contain 120,000 inhabitants. But in attempting to compute their actual number on the basis of personal observation, I got to consider 13,000 inhabitants as the highest limit within the range of probability."

"Dr. Williams puts the area of Chekiang at 39,150 square miles, and the number of inhabitants, according to the census of 1812, at 26,000,000; this gives an average of 671 inhabitants to a square mile. The discrepancy between this statement and my own is due, in part, to the destruction of life by the Tai-ping rebels. But it should teach us, at the same time, to accept with distrust statistical figures made up by the Chinese Government. The number of 617 inhabitants to the square mile exceeds by more than one half the density of population of Belgium, the most thickly settled country of Europe, and nearly four times the average density of France. These proportions appear quite unnatural, if it is borne in mind that Belgium is eminently an agricultural, manufacturing and mining country, while Chekiang, with the exception of one ninth of its area, which undoubtedly was formerly among the most densely inhabited portions of the globe, is covered with hills interspersed with a few valleys. Whoever has travelled through the province must consider the number given by the so called census as perfectly absurd. If the number of twenty-six millions is reduced by one half, or thirteen millions, the average density of the population would still have exceeded that of Belgium. It is not probable that it ever has been up to so favorable a proportion in the most flourishing times."

Mr. Hipplesley of the Customs service published in his report from Chekiang of 1879, that he "had read in the Peking Gazette of March, 17th, 1880, a postscript memorial from the Governor of this province reporting the result of a general census held in the Autumn of the fifth year of the present reign (1879). The population of Chekiang which I had estimated as slightly over 15,000,000 is given according to this census at 11,541,054. The census of 1812 having stated the then population at 29,256,784 the present returns show a reduction of 14,700,000 souls, or nearly 60 per cent and an average to the square mile of 265, instead of 671, [which was the average according to the census of 1812]."

The reduction in the number of the population of this one province as stated by an *official census* of 1876 is nearly $\frac{3}{5}$ of 25 millions, the number of reduction which Dr. Williams supposes might have occurred in the whole eighteen provinces by the causes referred to.

I proceed to present statements showing depopulation in the province of Nganhwei. Baron Von Richthoven says in the same letter quoted from above of 1871 "Nganhwei is known to be among the most populous provinces of China; and although the Tai-ping rebellion was attended by *at least as great a destruction of life and property as in Chekiang*, the productive power of the country is still great. * * * If one considers the state of utter depopulation of the provinces infested by the Tai-ping rebels;" &c. p. 18. In *Chinas Millions* for July 1875, p. 44, a writer describing the horrors of civil war in China says; "Nganhwei province had for merely a population of 39 millions. During the latter part of the Tai-ping rebellion it suffered most severely. Twice did the rebel hordes pass through its fertile valleys, carrying off its possessions and with them multitudes of the people, never alas! to return to their desolated home. A great part of the population fled at the approach of the rebels. Famine followed and pestilence in its wake. Thirty out of the thirty-nine millions were swept away to their eternal destiny. So complete in some districts was the destruction, that for miles not a man, nor woman, nor child, not a hamlet, nor cottage, nor hut was left behind: and years after, heaps of unburied bones told the passers by of the fate of the hapless inhabitants." In *Chinas Millions* for 1878, Mr. J. J. Turner, when making a journey through the north part of Nganhwei, says; "crossing the Yang-tze we soon entered the road in a north-western direction. The northern part of this province through which our road lay is very desolate. *Here and there* are signs of cultivation, but the *greater part* of it is lying waste. There were some well built bridges partly destroyed, a few villages of mud huts among heaps of ruins and very few people are to be seen. I believe thirty millions from this province perished in the rebellion. We passed through their villages, and saw the ruins; we passed by some of their cities and saw marks of violence on every hand." p. 10.

In *Chinas Millions* for April 1880, p. 45. Mr. Pearse writes, "By means of visiting we have during the last two years visited all the prefectural and district cities but seven, [north of the Yang-tze river] besides a large number of other small places in the south part of Nganhwei, as well as several cities and town in the north of the province and in Kiangsi and in Chekiang. So far as I have had opportunity for judging, the present population of Nganhwei is small compared with some of the other provinces. Previous to the Tai-ping rebellion, no doubt it was much greater; for but with few exceptions *every city, town or, village* through which I have passed is more or less in ruins. In some parts, which present the appearance

of having once been large and flourishing villages, the buildings have all been destroyed, and scarcely a single house now remains entire, whilst not a dozen of people are to be seen in the place. Further on one may see large and solidly built houses, apparently in good preservation, but unoccupied, the owners or tenants having in the troublous times been either killed, or fled for safety to quieter regions, and never returned * * In the villages but a small number of the original inhabitants remain, *the land being mostly tilled by immigrants from Hupeh and Kiangsi*; whilst in the cities also, men from a distance often out-number the natives of the place. Although there has been such a large *influx* of agriculturalist from other provinces, much of the land both on the hill-sides and in the plains, that was formerly cultivated, is now lying waste for the want of some one to work it." These statements are made of the province fifteen years after the retaking of Nanking and the dispersion of the insurgents. The statements will fully support the supposition that more than one-half if not two-thirds of the population of Nganhwei perished during the ten years that it was overrun and plundered by the insurgents and the mandarin soldiers. As the number of the inhabitants is stated in the census of 1812 to be 84,168,052, and by the census of 1842 to be 36,596,988, we may suppose that some 20 millions of the people perished.

I have not been able to find any detailed statements of travellers through the parts of Kiangsu and Kiangsi provinces which lie near to Nanking and which were for a longer or shorter period of time subject to the same marauding and plundering expeditions of the insurgents during the time that they occupied that city. They were entirely supported by plundering from the residents of those places into which they made incursions. But we may suppose that in the parts of these provinces there was the same destruction of life and property as was experienced in Chekiang and Nganhwei provinces, and twenty millions will probably be a low estimate for the number of lives lost in Kiangsu and Kiangsi. Some eleven other provinces, besides the few in the immediate vicinity of Nanking, were more or less ravaged by the Tai-ping insurgents. I have not seen any detailed statements of the extent of the desolation effected by them in their course. But judging from what they did elsewhere we may suppose it was very great. Honan, Hupeh and Hunan suffered greatly, but Kwangsi suffered more than any of them, as the insurrection commenced there and enlarged its operations for three successive years till it gained sufficient strength to start on its march. Mr. Cameron of the Inland Mission and Mr. Colquhoun have made incidental references to the depopulation

of Kwangsi and of extensive districts lying uncultivated in it. And other members of the Inland Mission have referred to the same scenes of desolation as in the other named provinces. More than twenty years ago the Kweichow province suffered from the outbreaks of the Miao-tsz tribes: and subsequent to that Hunan in the south-west and Kansuh in the south-west were desolated by the Mohammedan rebellions. Of the desolation and depopulation effected in the provinces of Kweichow and Yünnan we find these statements by Mr. Margary in the account of his journey from Shanghai to Bhamo in 1874. Of the Shih-ping district city he says "the city was, like the rest, reduced by devastation to a straggling hamlet. The Yamen itself was newly built, and stood alone, as it were out in the country on a site once surrounded by a busy population." p. 179. "Every village I passed through showed sad signs of the savage havoc made by the raid of the Miao-tze. Every where extensive remains of good substantial store-houses pointed out the prosperity that must have been, and in their stead twenty years of peace and quiet had only produced a huddled group of straw thatched huts, inhabited by *immigrants* from Szch'uan and Kiangsi." p. 182. "The road passed through a very fertile and beautiful, but wholly deserted, region. Large tracts of good arable land were given up to grass and wild weeds. This fact alone speaks very plainly of the *wide spread desolation*." p. 183. "This province of Kweichow is sadly devastated, all the cities are reduced to mere villages and the villages to a mere collection of straw huts. Everywhere ruins of good substantial houses abound, and show what a prosperous region this once was before the wild men of the hills came down *en masse* and *butchered the whole population*. This occurred twenty years ago and still the devoted cities remain as cities of the dead, with extensive walls surrounding acres of ruins." p. 187. "The country (after passing the capital city) was rather more colonized than on the east side of the capital, but still vast tracts of level arable land, bearing distinct signs of former tillage were completely deserted and covered with long grass. The villages on the main road are of a most miserable description. They were far apart and contained few inhabitants who were mostly *immigrants* from Szch'uan." p. 202 "The whole route to-day passed through a fertile valley perfectly level and some six to eight miles wide. It was only partially cultivated, for the country has not yet had time to recover from its twenty years of desolation. It was only last year that this road became free from dangers and obstructions, and *immigrants* could come with safety to occupy the deserted wastes." p. 203. Having

passed the boundary into Yünnan, he writes, "on leaving Yang-lin the ruins caused by the war were sadly prominent. The area which had been covered by houses was evidently very large." p. 231. "Since the war brought ruin on every town there has not been sufficient time for resuscitation. The country to-day showed signs of past cultivation but now lies *utterly deserted*." p. 246. "The city walls [of An-ning chow] were completely destroyed, and nothing had been done yet to rebuild them." p. 248. "All the villages are in ruins, and the valleys, of which we crossed three or four, are sparsely populated." pp. 253. "The country on this side [the west] of Yünnan Fu is sadly deserted." p. 255. "The city walls [of Chio-hsiung] enclosed almost a houseless waste." p. 259. "It is melancholy to see these fine valleys given up to rank grass, and the ruined villages and plainly distinguishable fields lying in silent attestation of former prosperity. Every day I come to what was a busy city, but now only containing a few new houses, inside walls which surround a wide space of ruins, swept empty of many hundred habitations." p. 262. This is Mr. Magary's statement of the appearance of the country as he passed through the whole extent from North-east to the South-west of the two provinces.

In *Chinas Millions* for December, 1880, p. 161. Mr. Baller writes, "The poverty stricken appearance of the country we passed through [in Kweichow] in our nine days journey contrasted unfavourably with the well-to-do air of Hunan. The city wore a desolate appearance, being in places little better than heaps of ruins, with one street running down the middle. In these towns even in the way of provisions but little could be bought; indeed, they were the most woe-begone cities I have seen any where in China, with the exception of some of the cities in Honan during the time of the famine. Judging from the present scantiness of population and the devastated state of the country, a *large proportion* of the inhabitants must have been slain." In *Chinas Millions* for September, 1881, p. 105, Mr. H. Soltau says, "There has been, and there still is, a large influx of people from the adjacent over-crowded province of Si-chuen, and marks of the terrible Mohammedan rebellion [in Yünnan] are gradually disappearing. Many districts which, in Mr. Baber's report are noted as being uncultivated and *without population*, have now been brought under cultivation and are being rapidly repopulated." Similar statements in regard to the evidences of depopulation are found in Mr. Colquhoun's book in regard to Yünnan; but it is not necessary to multiply quotations. Mr. George Parker, of the China Inland Mission who had read my remarks in the article on the "Population of China, in the March-April number

of the *Recorder* for 1883, "we have no detailed statement of the depopulation of the country in Kansuh province by European travellers" has sent me the following statements of his own observations in that part of China. On September 23rd, 1883, he writes, "I subjoin items of information gathered from personal inquiry in every part of the province and leave you to form your own conclusions. The Tai-ping rebels only destroyed one department, Kian-chow in the south, and a district city Liang-tang in the Tsín-chow department. The Mohammedans rose up in the first year of Tung-chi and were pacified by arbitration in the first year of Kwang-sü. Until the last year of Tung-chi they were unresisted in their bloody career. The provincial capital was not destroyed, and Tsinchow-fu city also escaped; but the rest of the province was given up to their butchery for more than ten years. When the Honan soldiers came to get back the land for the Emperor they came too late to save the people. Lang-tai-hien in the South-east, the smallest and most out-of-the way city in Kansuh lost 7000 people by slaughter when the city was taken. "Ku-üen, the residence of the chief military officer of the province (Tituh) is said to have been second only to Lanchow, the capital, in numbers, and to have had a population of 220,000 souls. I said to my informer, perhaps there are 2 or 3 thousand families now. He laughed at my exorbitant estimate. The Tsinchow Department suffered less than any other part. At the examination for degrees this year there were said to be about 4000 candidates for the first degree from its six counties. I have just returned from Eastern Kansuh having visited several department cities just after the examinations had been held in them. At Kiang-iang Fu city there were only *one hundred* student attended the examination for civil honors, and eighty military candidates, from the five counties connected with the department. The one hundred candidates were not sufficient to receive all the degrees due to the department. [Before the war the number of candidates would have been nearly four thousand]. From the four counties of the Kin-chow department there were *one hundred* candidates present at the examination. From the six counties of the Ning-hia department there were six hundred candidates attended the examinations. Chong-sin district in the Kin-chow department is almost without inhabitants. Kiang-iang city, once the residence of the Chow Kings, has only four hundred families. Hoh-chow city and the valley in which it is situated, which is more than 30 miles in length, cannot make up *one hundred* families. Ning-chow city and suburbs has 60 or 70 families. Ching-ning city has 60 *families*. Eastern Kansuh before the rebellion was the most populous part of the province.

The extended table land that stretches away to Mongolia is cut up by deep gullies and these had been terraced from top to bottom. You may search these gullies one after another and not find one plot under cultivation. The numerous cave villages are also without an inhabitant except the wolves, which find a comfortable place to breed in, in what were once human habitations. Great market towns like I-ma-kuan and Si-hua-chih are now without an inhabitant. The rebels pulled down every wall of the houses as well as put the inhabitants to the sword. At the large town of Ping-uen-so, which formerly had 13 pawnshops, 23 wine stores, and 36 oil vats or ware-houses, now not one of either remains; at a stage further to the north is Hia-ma-kuan, which was entered after a six months siege and the population put to death. Out of the 800 families then within the walls only the representatives of 4 *families* have since turned up. Not far south of Singchow near the Yellow River is Shih-kwei. This place had 36 potteries to supply the north of the province with large jars. Now only *three* are at work. You can form your own conclusions. I am quite sure that my estimate of *one million* for the whole province is near the truth instead of the ordinarily quoted one, of *fifteen millions*."

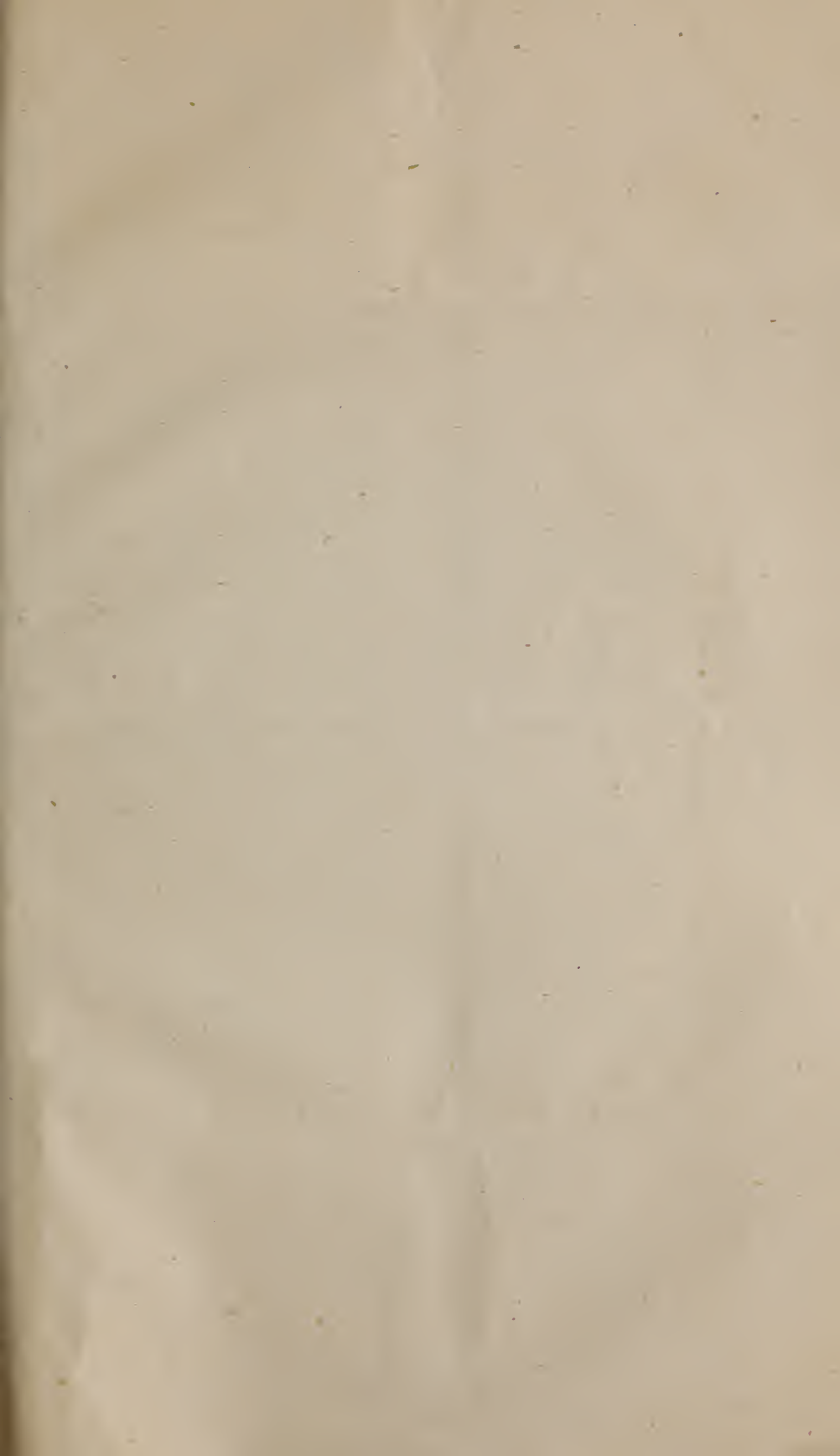
From the statements made by those who have travelled through the whole length and breadth of the three provinces in the South-west and North-west, viz, Yünnan, Kweichow and Kansuh, it is evident that more than one-half of the population of the two former must have perished, and more than four-fifths of *the latter*, Kansuh, or some 18 or 20 millions during the fifteen years of war and butchery.

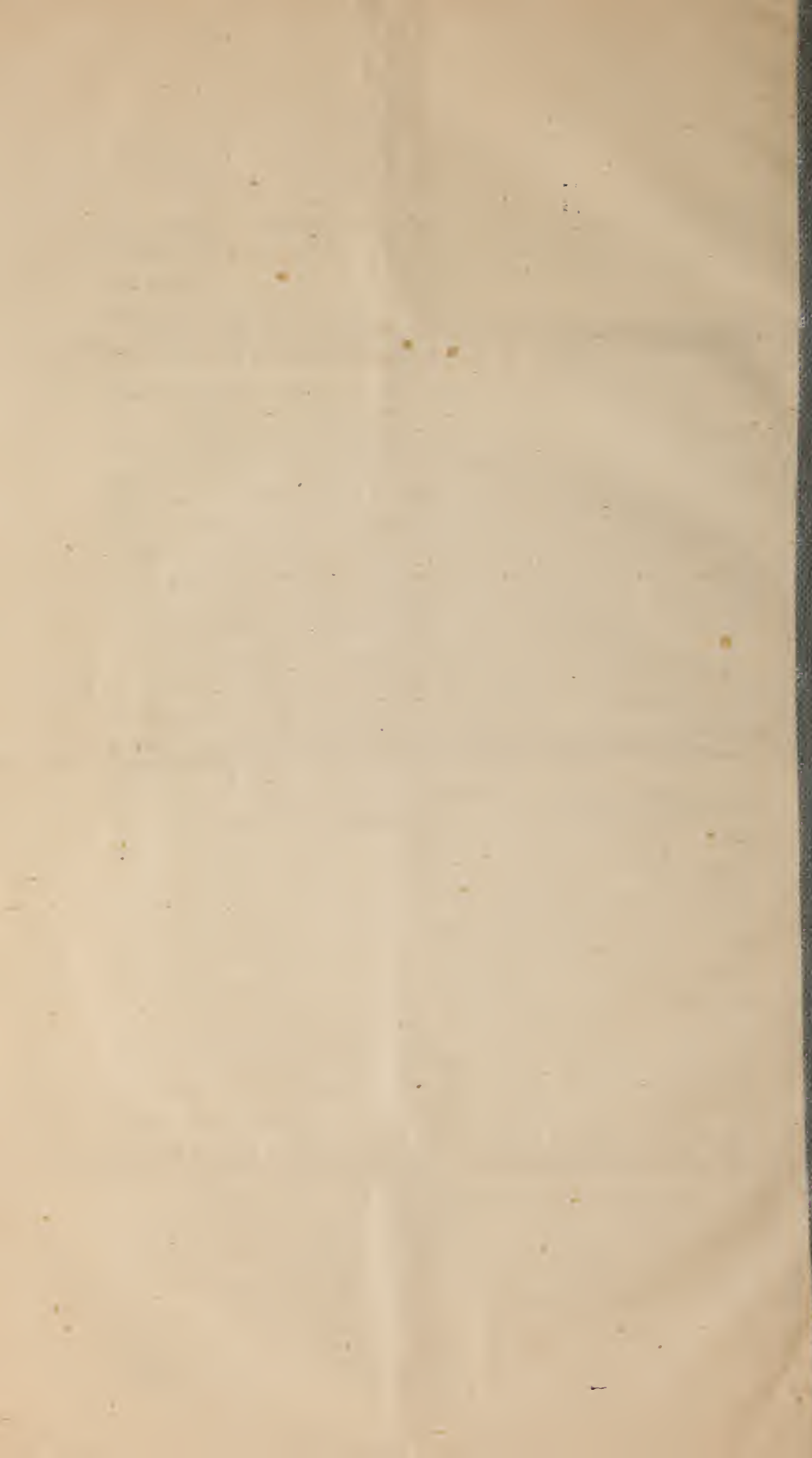
The dreadful scenes witnessed in the four adjacent provinces of Chihli, Shansi, Shensi and Honan including a population of some seventy millions during the recent great famine are too fresh in the memory of all to require any detailed statements to satisfy all of the terrible loss of life, which resulted from it. The famine relief committee give their estimate of the loss of life at *thirteen millions* while others gave the estimate at twenty millions. The probability of this latter number would appear to be confirmed by the statements which travellers have given of the extensive depopulation which is everywhere manifest throughout the districts in which the famine and the subsequent pestilence prevailed. These statements of travellers and others, of the depopulation of the country by insurrections and wars, by famine and pestilence more than justify the opinion that the loss of life in China has been more than one hundred million. But happily we will soon no longer be under the necessity of depending upon conjecture in regard to the *present population* of China. It is well known that the German minister

at the Court of Peking, more than a year ago obtained from the Boards at the capital the details of a census taken very recently, and that these details are in the course of publication by M. Von Brandt, during his visit to Germany.*

They may be expected now very soon. It has been stated by rumor that the aggregate population of eighteen provinces as reported in this census is in the neighborhood of 260 millions. The above statements by persons who have travelled through so many of the provinces will, we think, prepare all who read them to receive the figures of this recent census as nearly correct. All will wait the publication of the details in regard to each province with great interest. For, however strong the arguments of Dr. Williams may be for the correction of the census of 1812 *at the time* when it was taken, in the face of the facts, which have been made known by travellers and others, no one can be satisfied with it as giving us a knowledge of *the present population* of this country. And there is just the same reason to suppose that a census taken in 1881, or 1882 is taken as carefully and as accurately as the one taken 1812. The difference in the number of the population as given, by report, in this late census, and that of 1812, is very great; but much greater between it and the number given in the census of 1842. The difference between 260 millions and 362 millions is very great when it refers to the population of the same country. The difference between 260, millions and 380 millions or 414 millions the number given in other censuses, is still greater. In this practical age it would be productive of little good to institute special inquiries in order to decide the question whether this difference in the present number of the population, as given in this last census, from what it was at the time the former censuses were taken, arises from the great destruction of life in the country during the intervening years; or whether it has arisen from inaccuracy in the mode of computing the aggregate of individuals compassed in the population. In my opinion the difference is due neither to one nor the other cause exclusively but largely to both causes. It is true beyond all doubt that there has been a great destruction of life in China during these last forty years, and it is most probably true that there have been great inaccuracies in the method of making up the aggregate of the population in the different censuses. We may hope that M. Von Brandt has so presented the details of the census which he has prepared and is publishing to the world, as will commend the results to the credence of all, and thus settle this long disputed and yet interesting question.

* See *N. C. Herald*, April 4th, 1883, p. 369.





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